

BIAS AGAINST WOMEN PREACHERS

November 26, 1996 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The December 1996 issue of Charisma magazine contains an article titled "Pentecostals Urged to End Bias Against Women Ministers."

The report focuses on activities within the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) to "examine how their churches have promoted male chauvinism." A meeting was held in November in Memphis to consider this matter. Leaders were urged to dismantle "a stained-glass ceiling" that prohibits women from serving as pastors or holding other church offices.

The PCCNA, formed in 1994, is an organization of Pentecostal and charismatic denominations which desire to end racial division among their ranks. It exists to encourage interracial fellowship and dialogue among various church groups, but it does not have any actual authority over its member denominations. Now it is facing the alleged problem of prejudice against women.

Shari Benvenauti, an ordained minister in the Foursquare Pentecostal denomination, said: "We are not women who wish to displace men. We are women who simply and humbly ask that we be given room to be obedient to the Lord who called us."

Barbara Amos, pastor of the Faith Deliverance Christian Center in Norfolk, Virginia, addressed the Memphis meeting. Her 2,000-member church began 10 years ago with four people. Today it operates a jail ministry, a homeless shelter, a school and day-care center, substance abuse programs, and an outreach to AIDS patients. She told Charisma magazine that "few people who see the results of her ministry have the nerve to question her qualifications for ordination."

Friends, I have the nerve to question her qualifications for ordination to the pastorate. The Apostle Paul plainly forbade the women to teach or to usurp authority over the man (1 Timothy 2:12-14). It is impossible for a woman to obey this apostolic injunction and be a pastor. A pastor has authority over the church. The woman is forbidden to exercise such authority. Those who ignore this prohibition are rebelling against the clear teaching of the Word of God. This is confusion. The Apostle had to correct the carnal church at Corinth in a similar fashion. They were abusing and misusing the spiritual gifts, and he instructed them that the women are to keep silence in the churches (1 Cor. 14:34). This is in the context of exercising the gifts of tongues and prophecy. He concluded, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). The man or woman who is truly spiritual will acknowledge that Paul's writings are the commandments of God.

Paul was not prejudiced against women. He was not a male chauvinist. He merely made the proper distinction between the man and the woman and exhorted that men be men and women be women. They were created for different purposes in this world.